Hamilton Institution. Jan. 9th 1846.

To the Society of Inquiry of
Princeton Theo. Institution.

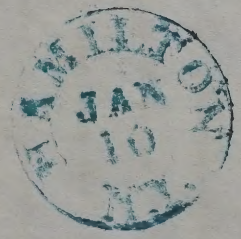
Dear Brethren.

In your last epistle to us, after briefly stating the method of your procedure in regard to religious inquiry, you say, "whether a Society, which would lead to a more personal inquiry as to duty, would not be of great benefit among us, we are not able to decide — This appears, from your letter, to be the nature of your Society." We would say, that our organization contemplates no particular field. It embraces the whole field in its investigations, the home as well as the foreign. In this respect, our Society probably is similar to your own. There are, however, in our Seminary, two associations distinct from us, and also from each other, which especially contemplate the missionary field. One is the Eastern Association, the members of which have in view the eastern field; the other is the Western Association, the members of which have in view the western field. No person can become a member of either association, who is not inquiring his duty, or who has not an impression of duty, in regard to the missionary work. This plan results in making the missionary cause a matter of personal inquiry, in awaking, preserving, and encouraging the missionary spirit, which, we are happy to say, still warms and animates the hearts of a devoted band among us. We have good reason to say, that there many young men in this seminary who turn longing eyes toward the high courts of pagan idolatry, who have a sober, settled desire to carry to them the precious gospel of Christ. Some of them will probably lead for foreign shores in the course of the present year.

The general spiritual condition of the Seminary is more cheering than has been for a few years past. We feel, as all must feel, the benumbing influence that has settled upon this portion of the christian world. The prevailing spiritual torpor has reached even within these walls; still, there is a more consistent and sober feeling of duty among us, manifesting itself in a delightful harmony and union and in humble and earnest appeals to God to revive his work in the hearts of his people. We trust, that we are not indifferent spectators of the aspects and phenomena of the religious world at the present time. Much is there obvious to the prayerful observer, to impress him with the solemn conviction, that, while there are many faithful watchmen at their post as the watch-towers of Zion who have the one great object ever before them, there is an alarmingly increasing number of ministers with divided affections and a world-soiled service. While busy inquiry is peering inquisitively under the garments of private members to spy out the spots and the diseases of the church, may we not as well scrutinize their spiritual instructions, and see if they too may not be exhaling a tainted breath? Splendid discourses may be wrought, but are they interwoven with spiritual instruction? The gospel may be promulged theoretically, but is it also promulged in the demonstration of the Spirit! Jesus Christ may be preached, but is he preached Christ crucified? Our prayer, dear brethren, is that you with us may have that spirit of our divine Master, which confesses, mingled, wept over, and personally concerned itself about, a world dead in trespasses and sins. If we can get to view the world as dead in sin, then, if animated with the love of Christ, shall we labor acceptably to God and comfortably to ourselves. God bless his precious word to the glory of his great name and to the salvation of sinners. Amen.

Yours in the bonds of christian love.

S. Stiles Parker. Cor. Secty.



Corresponding Secty of Society of Inquiry
Princeton Theo. Seminary.
New Jersey.